

# FAQ

## Termination of Federal Schedule A Appointments

The following questions and answers pertain to University of Missouri employees, who previously received federal benefits through Federal Schedule A appointments, including Civil Service Retirement System, Federal Employees Retirement System, Thrift Savings Plan and Federal Employees Group Life Insurance. On May 13, 2002, the President signed into law the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, ordering the termination of Schedule A Excepted Service appointments, which provided individuals who carry out extension work through land-grant institutions with dual government appointments. Such appointments were terminated on Jan. 31, 2003.

The following questions and answers address common concerns. For more information, contact Tamra Robbins, Administrative Management - Benefits, at 573-882-7755 or via email at [RobbinsT@umsystem.edu](mailto:RobbinsT@umsystem.edu).

### **Q. What effect does Section 7220 of the Farm Bill of 2002 have on my appointment?**

A. Section 7220(a) terminated federal Schedule A Excepted Service appointments for cooperative extension employees of land-grant universities, on Jan. 31, 2003. However, if you were participating in or were eligible to participate in the following federal benefit programs as of May 12, 2002, you will continue to be eligible for benefit plans in which Missouri participates:

- Federal Employee Group Life Insurance Programs (FEGLI)
- Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS)
- Federal Employee Retirement System (FERS)
- Thrift Savings Plan (TSP).

## Benefits

### **Q. Will I continue to receive creditable service towards federal retirement after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. All CES service after Jan. 31, 2003, will be credited for federal retirement so long as you continue to meet the following employment conditions:

Formally employed in a Cooperative Extension Service (CES) organization; At least 50 percent extension function; Extension function is permanent and year-round.

### **Q. If my CES organization permits nine-month appointments, can I elect this type of arrangement and continue federal benefits?**

A. No. Federal benefits are based on permanent, year-round extension appointments.

### **Q. If I have deposit or redeposit service, will I be able to make deposits after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. All creditable service after Jan. 31, 2003, will be credited, and any creditable service that requires a deposit or redeposit of creditable service for retirement is permitted under the federal regulations.

**Q. Will I be able to request and receive a refund for excess contributions after Jan. 31, 2003, and before I plan to retire?**

A. Yes. If an employee has excess contributions, they may request a refund after Jan. 31, 2003.

**Q. Will I be able to make voluntary contributions to my federal retirement plan after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. Employees may make voluntary contributions after Jan. 31, 2003, if they desire.

**Q. Will I be able to continue to participate in the federal Health Premium Conversion plan if my CES organization participates in it?**

A. No, Missouri does not participate in HB-PC.

**Q. Will I be able to participate in new federal benefit and retirement programs available after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. No. You will be eligible for only the following programs, based on eligibility as of May 12, 2002:

- FEGLI
- CSRS
- FERS
- TSP.

**Q. Will I be subject to changes within these federal benefits after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. Changes in benefit coverage and participation requirements, including cost increases and changes in benefit carriers, will continue to affect CES employees.

**Q. Will I be able to change my retirement from CSRS or CSRS Offset to FERS during a FERS open SEASON held after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. CES employees who participate in the federal retirement plans will be able to participate in FERS open seasons.

**Q. Will I be able to participate in Federal Employees Group Life Insurance and Thrift Savings Plan open season after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. CES employees eligible to participate in these plans as of May 12, 2002, may participate in FEGLI and TSP open seasons after Jan. 31, 2003.

**Q. Will I be able to participate in open seasons and enroll in the federal benefits if I was not enrolled before Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. CES employees who are not enrolled in FEGLI and TSP may participate during open season IF their employing CES organization participated in the specific benefit program on May 12, 2002.

**Q. Will I continue to pay the same cost for federal benefits and programs that other federal employees pay?**

A. Yes. Employee contributions will continue at the same rate as other federal employees.

**Q. How will I be kept up to date on federal benefits programs and retirement plans?**

A. You will continue to receive information on federal benefit programs in the same manner that you have. In addition, the revised CES Handbook contains current information on the federal benefit programs and will be maintained on the CSREES website. Information also is available by contacting Tamra Robbins, Extension Human Resources, at 573-882-7755 or via email at RobbinsT@umsystem.edu.

## Record Keeping

**Q. Will I receive information on my current benefits before my federal appointment is terminated?**

A. Yes. All CES employees with a companion Schedule A appointment will receive a copy of CES-436 "Notification of Personnel Action," which documents your benefit coverage determinations. CES-436 includes information on creditable service for retirement (CSD for Retirement) and participation in the FEGLI and TSP. Employees should review their copy of the personnel action form and address any questions or concerns by contacting Tamra Robbins, Extension Human Resources, at 573-882-7755 or via email at RobbinsT@umsystem.edu.

**Q. Who will have a record of my employment and information on my creditable service for federal retirement?**

A. A record of employment is documented in your official personnel folder maintained by the University of Missouri Extension benefits office. Your OPF will be maintained and updated as changes are made to your benefits. In addition, individual retirement records that have been used to document your creditable service and deposits to your retirement account will continue to be documented until you retire or separate under some other action.

## Personnel Actions

**Q. Will I continue to receive copies of my federal personnel actions, i.e., CES-436s?**

A. Yes, you will continue to receive copies of your personnel actions processed from present to Jan. 31, 2003. Your last federal personnel action will be termination of your federal appointment, effective Jan. 31, 2003. CES-436s will not be processed after Jan. 31, 2003; however, changes in benefits and options will be documented on the appropriate federal form and recorded in your OPF.

**Q. Will there be a change in the way my benefit contributions are withheld and/or processed?**

A. At the present time, there will be no changes in the way contributions processed. However, new programs and systems, implemented after Jan. 31, 2003, may affect the way your contributions are withheld and/or processed.

## Injury Claims

**Q. If I am injured on the job after Jan. 31, 2003, who should I contact?**

A. If you sustain a work-related injury, complete the Report of Injury form located on the Faculty and Staff, Human Resources, Benefits webpage (<http://extension.missouri.edu/hr/benefits.aspx>) within 24-hours of your injury. Send the completed form to Risk and Insurance Management ([hollingerle@missouri.edu](mailto:hollingerle@missouri.edu)). You may also contact Tamra Robbins, Extension Human Resources, at 573-882-7755 or via email at RobbinsT@umsystem.edu.

**Q. If I am injured on the job after Jan. 31, 2003 and need to file a claim, do I file the claim under the state workers' compensation, or the federal workers' compensation?**

A. All claims for on the job illness/injury after Jan. 31, 2003, must be filed with the University.

**Q. If I have an injury claim on file with the Department of Labor, Office of Worker's Compensation Program and I am receiving medical and/or compensation benefits, will I continue to receive medical benefits?**

A. All OWCP cases filed before Feb. 1, 2003, will continue to be the responsibility of the federal government. Medical costs and any compensation due the employee will continue to be paid by the federal OWCP.

## Separation Actions

**Q. Will I be able to retire after Jan. 31, 2003 under the same conditions and with the same requirements available before Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. Yes. Retirement provisions covering employees in federal retirement plans will continue to apply to former federal appointees.

**Q. Can I retire and return after Jan. 31, 2003, and not be subject to the federal re-employment annuitant provisions?**

A. Yes, if you have a break in service. Effective Feb. 1, 2003, CES no longer will be able to grant reappointments with a break in service because the organization does not meet the criteria for creditable service for federal retirement.

**Q. Who is my contact for information on my federal benefits and the federal retirement program?**

A. The contact for University of Missouri Extension is Tamra Robbins, Extension Human Resources, 573-882-7755 or via email at RobbinsT@umsystem.edu. In addition, information on the retirement plans and benefits programs can be found in the administrative handbook for CES work.

**Q. Will I be able to transfer to another CES organization after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. All CES Schedule A appointees on the rolls as of Jan. 31, 2003, can be reappointed to another CES office IF they do not have a break in service of more than three days.

**Q. What effect would a transfer to another CES office have on my benefits?**

A. Generally, if you accept employment in another CES office without a break in service, your current benefits and retirement coverage will transferred with you as long as the new CES organization participates in those programs. Because CES organization participation varies, verify with the benefit programs in which the new CES organization participates. You will be eligible for only those programs in which the new organization participates. If the new organization participates in other federal benefit programs, you will be eligible for those. Federal rules apply to you as if you were a new Federal employee for that particular benefit.

However, all of the above is limited by the provision in SEC. 7220 that, in such a move, the receiving CES organization must have employed, within 1 year prior to the move, a different former dual appointee who had performed the same duties of employment. If the receiving CES organization has not, the moving former dual appointee may not participate in any of the Federal benefit programs available under SEC. 7220 to former dual appointees at the receiving CES organization.

Leave cannot be transferred from one CES organization to another. As with any other leave, Frozen Sick Leave cannot be transferred from one CES organization to another to compute length of service for retirement.

**Q. What effect would a transfer to a federal agency have on my benefits?**

A. If you transfer to a federal agency that grants you a federal appointment, all benefits would transfer. If your CES organization did not participate in a particular benefit, you would then be eligible those benefits and be treated as a new federal employee.

**Q. Can I be appointed to a federal agency if I resign after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. You may be appointed to a federal agency after Jan. 31, 2003, and all of your federal service with CES, including all time after Jan. 31, 2003, will be credited toward federal retirement.

**Q. Will we still have opportunities for federal early retirements, i.e., Discontinued Service Retirements and Voluntary Early Retirement Authorities?**

A. Yes.

**Q. Will I continue to receive credit for Frozen Sick Leave after Jan. 31, 2003?**

A. You will continue to receive credit for Frozen Sick Leave IF you continue to be employed by the CES organization that employed you when the leave was frozen.

**Q. Will I continue to be covered by the conditions and requirements to transfer my life insurance when I retire?**

A. Yes. You will be subject to the same regulations and procedures for transfer of life insurance into retirement that apply to all federal employees. This is regular paragraph text called "Normal, Body paragraph (normal)" in the Styles Pane. All styles listed below should be available in the Styles Pane.